THE IDEA OF TIMBRE IN THE AGE OF HAYDN

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At the end of the 18th century, instrumental music, formerly subordinate to vocal music and shackled to the doctrine of imitation, dramatically emerged as a new and powerful form or art, capable of expression. Many scholars today turn to developments in aesthetic philosophy—the birth of German Idealism, "absolute music," or Kantian formalism—to explain the changing perception of instrumental music. Such explanations, though they illuminate important aspects of contemporary philosophy, ultimately blind us to fascinating developments in musical practice. This dissertation locates the heart of this transformation not in philosophical aesthetics, but in the musical medium itself, specifically focusing on the birth of the concept of *timbre* and the ensuing transformations to musical discourse.

Tracing the concept of timbre from its birth in the writings of Rousseau through its crystallization in the early 19th century with the emergence of "orchestra machines" and a widespread obsession with *effect*, the dissertation explores the impact of the new focus on the musical medium in different registers of musical culture. The project examines the use of the metaphor of color borrowed from painting and Newtonian science, the philosophical attitudes towards transience and

sensation in the writings of Kant and Herder, ideas of composition and orchestration in music treatises, and composers' new uses for the orchestra through close analysis of Haydn's style of orchestration in the 1790s. In addition, the dissertation draws upon as resources many now-forgotten instruments that were invented in this period. Celebrated in their day, these instruments serve as invaluable repositories of the sonorities that captured the 18th- and early 19th-century ear.

These changes in musical practice were fueled by the solidification of the orchestra as a concept, musical body, and institution. Whereas earlier critics likened instrumental sonorities to random paint splatters, later thinkers emphasized the individual character and inherent expressive capacity of each instrument. Only after this radical reevaluation of its foundations could music begin to be recognized as a means to connect with the human heart and mind.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in 1977 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Emily Dolan attended the University of Minnesota between 1993 and 1999. She studied classics, music, and philosophy, graduating with B.A. *summa cum laude* in Latin. In 2000, Dolan began her studies at Cornell University, where she worked with Neal Zaslaw, Richard Leppert, Annette Richards, and James Webster. She has presented papers at conferences including the national and chapter meetings of the American Musicological Society, the British and American Societies for Eighteenth Century Music, the International Association for Popular Music Studies, and at the Research Center for Social Common Capital at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. Her article, "The Origins of the Orchestra Machine" appeared in *Current Musicology* in the fall of 2003. In 2005, Dolan received an Alvin H. Johnson AMS-50 dissertation fellowship. Dolan will begin a position as assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the fall of 2006

To my mother and the memory of my father,

for everything.

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Many other people have also helped me immensely along the way. I would like to thank the faculty in music at Cornell, especially Becky Harris-Warrick, Judith Peraino, Steve Pond, David Rosen, and Roberto Sierra. My colleagues Nicholas Mathew and Gary Moulsdale have helped me prepare grant applications and conference papers on countless occasions. Thanks also to Tom Schneller for his help navigating German sources. It is with sadness that I convey my great debt to Lenore Coral, who did not get to see the end of this project. She helped me at many stages of my research, and was also a great friend.

This dissertation would not exist were not for my family. My parents' enthusiasm for my scholarly pursuits gave me the energy to keep working on this project even in the most difficult times. My mother, Rosemarie Dolan, gave me endless support, which ranged from long telephone conversations to fabulous recipes. My father, John

Dolan, gave me unconditional love, help and encouragement, both as a parent and as a professor. He passed away in September of 2005, and remained my teacher until the very end. Many thanks also to my sister, Elizabeth Dolan, and brother-in-law, Charles Geach, and to my brother, Sean Dolan, all of whom helped me during my graduate work. I completed my dissertation on the now war-torn laptop Sean generously gave me three years ago.

I am grateful to the American Musicological Society for awarding me an Alvin H. Johnson AMS 50 Dissertation Fellowship (2005-2006), which allowed me to devote the time to this project that it deserved. The Institute for European Studies at Cornell awarded me a FLAS fellowship (2003-2004) for Italian language study, and two grants to spend time in England and Germany, where I carried out some of my primary source research. I also received two Grout Memorial Scholarships from the Music Department, which enabled me to carry out research in the Netherlands and Russia. Without this support, my project would have been far less interesting. Thanks to Jan Jaap Haspels, curator of the Nationaal Museum van Speelklok tot Pierement in Utrecht, and to Mikhail Gouriev, curator at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, for the time and generous help they gave me with their collections.

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PREFACE

The title of this dissertation reflects the initial plan for the project, which included a chapter devoted to Haydn's "London" Symphonies. This chapter was cut, but Haydn's role in the formation of a new orchestral aesthetic remained central to this project. Because Haydn's presence permeates the remaining chapters, I kept the original title.

I have been asked on several occasions how I originally thought of this topic. In January 2000, shortly after I had mailed in my applications to graduate school, I was driving with a friend when our conversation was brought to halt by curious tones on the radio. We listened with rapt attention to a piece of music that was certainly classical, but performed on an unusual-sounding instrument. I later learned that it was a glass harmonica, an instrument invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1761; the piece of music was Mozart's Adagio and Rondo K617. I was intrigued by the instrument itself (which later became the subject of my research); even more so, I was struck by my reaction to the music. What did it mean to be that captivated by the immediate sound of an instrument? Was that simply because I had never heard it before? How did people listen to the instrument in Mozart's time? What about other instruments? Did inventors produce other instruments with such striking timbres? These queries led to the question that became the frame for this dissertation: when did people start to talk about timbre apart from performance? Exploring this question has been enormously enjoyable, and I often think back to that fortuitous car ride six years ago.